CHRONICLE AND COMMENT

By ARTHUR BARTLETT MAURICE

INTIMATE pen pictures of some men and women of letters of our time is the gist of the wrapper indorsement of C. Lewis Hind's "More Authors and I," which has just been published by Dodd, Mead & Co. It is not a book of any particular importance. Briefly, it may be summed up as being neither undignified on the one hand nor astonishing on the other. When Mr. Hind, who was at one time editor of the London *Academy*, deals with American subjects—the book has obviously been written or compiled with the American market in mind—there is perceptible a kind of bending over in strained effort to be very explicit in order that the children may understand. But that of course is characteristic of a good many English writers. They can't help it and they mean it kindly, so there is no reason why any one should be annoyed. Dismissing that aspect of the work, there are informing odds and ends in "More Authors and I."

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MR. HIND does not hold a very exalted opinion of the work of the Spaniard, Blasco Ibanez, but he gives a vivid picture of his methods of work: "Ibanez begins a novel slowly, he climbs laboriously, he reaches the crest, then 'once on the other side I cannot stop myself—I rush headlong, whirling, plunging, working endlessly until I reach the finale.' He wrote 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' in four months in Paris in 1916. Toward the end 'I worked thirty hours at a stretch.'" In Mr. Hind's estimation "The Shadow of the Cathedral" is a much better book than "The Four Horsemen." "It shapes better, and the theme, a devastating indictment, is logically and comprehensively worked out." Discussing the popularity of "The Four Horsemen" Mr. Hind suggests: "Fifty per cent. of its success, perhaps more, was due to clever advertising; but 'The Four Horsemen' also galloped up Fifth avenue at the psychological moment."

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WITH "Babbitt" recently entered as a contender in the autumn "best seller" race, Mr. Sinclair Lewis is a conspicuous literary figure of the moment. According to Mr. Hind, Sinclair Lewis "writes as if Europe and New York had never existed, as if George Meredith and George Eliot, W. D. Howells and Mary Wilkins had never been. He is one of the new Westerners who are collaring American literature as a fullback collars the ball in a football game." Incidentally, some one should point out to Mr. Hind that in American football a fullback does not "collar" the ball. Of the personal Lewis Mr. Hind writes: "When this tall, slim, blond, youngish man appeared upon the platform I said to myself, 'William J. Locke. He is the American Locke.' The parallel is open to criticism because Locke is languid and his utterance has a pleasant drawl; Lewis is quick and his utterances may be likened to a Gatling gun."

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IT was Sinclair Lewis who introduced Mr. Hind to A. S. M. Hutchinson, and Mr. Hind is moved to write: "The significance of this episode may not be apparent to Oxford Dons or Appalachian mountaineers, but to a bookman its remarkable significance is that one 'best seller' introduced me to another 'best seller.'" He continues: "It was interesting to see these two young authors together, and to find these 'best sellers' enthusiastic about each other's work—the American tall, slim, blond, alert, with easy movements and quick eyes, noting things in a flash and directly; the Englishman slim, pale, reflective rather than alert, with the almost shy look of a man who absorbs before he expresses himself, and then obliquely rather than directly."

"WHEN WINTER COMES TO MAIN STREET" is the very felicitous and intriguing title of a new book by Grant Overton, published by the George H. Doran Company. It invites at once one criticism, which is not that it is frankly issued for the purpose of exploiting the works and personalities of the Doran authors of the hour. That is relatively of little importance. But both the wrapper and cover of the book are embellished by a design purporting to show a house of Main Street of a winter's night. The most unobservant reader must see instantly that here is not Main Street at all in the sense that it was interpreted to us in Sinclair Lewis's novel. The tone and architecture of the dwelling pictured are not of the raucous Main Street of today, but of a Main Street of some blessed past or of a hoped for future. Behind those curtains drawn against the snowy night there is cultivation—not the rag bag assortment of odds and ends of information acquired from the Chautauqua lecture or the correspondence school—but a real cultivation, grounded in the humanities.

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THE best bit of writing in "When Winter Comes to Main Street" is "Cobb's Fourth Dimension," by Mr. Robert H. Davis, and that in its original form appeared in THE NEW YORK HERALD book section last spring. Otherwise that would be the chapter demanding quotation. Yet the book is a mine of informing anecdote. For example, Arnold Bennett's astonishing literary industry—equalling the industry of Anthony Trollope—is reflected in an entry in his diary: "This year I have written 335,340 words, grand total; 224 articles and stories and four installments of a serial called 'The Gates of Wrath' have actually been published, and also my book of plays, 'Polite Farces.' My work included six or eight short stories not yet published, also the greater part of a 55,000 word serial 'Love and Life' for Tillotson's, and the whole draft, 80,000 words, of my Staffordshire novel 'Anna Tellwright.'"

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THERE is a dim recollection that the story of the suggestion of Arnold Bennett's "Old Wives' Tale" has been told before. In the autumn of 1903, when Bennett used to dine frequently in a Paris restaurant, it happened that a fat old woman came in who aroused almost universal merriment by her eccentric behavior. The novelist reflected: "This woman was once young, slim, perhaps beautiful; certainly free from these ridiculous mannerisms. Very probably she is unconscious of her singularities. Her case is a tragedy. One ought to be able to make a heartrending novel out of a woman such as she." The idea then occurred to him of writing the book which afterward became the "Old Wives' Tale," and in order to go one better than Guy de Maupassant's "Une Vie" he determined to make it the life history of two women instead of one.

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NATURALLY, many of the interesting American literary figures of the last half century appear in the course of "A World Worth While," by W. A. Rogers, who was for many years the distinguished cartoonist of THE NEW YORK HERALD. The book, which is published by Harper & Bros., has an introduction by Booth Tarkington, who tells what Mr. Rogers's work meant to the boys of his generation. Besides his cartoons Mr. Rogers made many illustrations for books, among them W. D. Howells's "A Hazard of New Fortunes," which originally appeared as a serial in *Harper's Weekly*. The artist made the illustrations from week to week, as the story came out. He never saw more than three installments ahead, and that only at the beginning. Later on he had to read hastily the galley proofs on Thursday afternoon and turn in his drawing Friday morning. But he felt himself compensated for his troubles through making the acquaintance of Mr. Howells, thus forming a friendship which lasted for many years.

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THERE was one character in "A Hazard of New Fortunes" over which author and artist differed; that was Fulkerson, the syndicate man. "Many people imagine that S. S. McClure was the model from whom Fulkerson was drawn, but it was not so." Mr. Howells had known a Fulkerson (by some other name of course) in real life many years before, when it was the fashion for a man of the world to wear long side whiskers, and it was with these adornments that poor Fulkerson was described in the manuscript. As side whiskers were not exactly in keeping with the period that "A Hazard of New Fortunes" was supposed to reflect, the artist pleaded with Mr. Howells to borrow the editorial scissors of *Harper's Weekly* and cut those whiskers off. But on the point Mr. Howells would not give way. Fulkerson in real life had long side whiskers, and those whiskers had to be introduced to the public in all their flowing glory.

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SAYS Mr. Rogers: "I hated to do it, but in the first picture of the syndicate man I made the whiskers appear flowing gently over his collar and giving him the appearance of a floorwalker in a second rate dry goods store. In the next instalment his whiskers were trimmed a trifle shorter; and so, from week to week, I performed the office of barber, free of charge, to Mr. Fulkerson, until at the end he had just a small decoration in front of each ear." One day in conversation Mr. Howells, then 79 years old, told the artist that "A Hazard of New Fortunes" was practically the story of his own later life. "So I haven't given up my pen. When I was 40 I said: 'At 50 I shall retire from the field.' At 50 I put it off until I should be 60; at 60 I felt I might continue my work to the age of 75; and now I look to 80 as perhaps a favorable time to cease writing—80, a fine round number, as one looks at it."

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"TRAMPING ON LIFE," by Harry Kemp, described as "an autobiographical novel," has just been published by Boni & Liveright. The word "novel" is apparently used with euphemistic intent, for to accept the book in the spirit in which it is obviously meant to be accepted is to regard such fiction as it contains as being introduced merely for decorative or rhetorical purposes. "Tramping on Life" is bumptious, blazing with egotism, raw, very well written in spots, less immoral than it is in shocking bad taste. It is easy to see that Mr. Kemp feels that a poet is a privileged person. Perhaps he is, but Mr. Kemp has rather abused the privilege. For years Puritans have been holding up their hands at the famous, or notorious, love affair of George Sand and Alfred de Musset, not so much on account of the affair itself but because each of the talented and eccentric participants afterward wrote about it, one in "Elle et Lui" and the other in "Lui et Elle." Neither, however, saw fit to introduce a vulgar intrigue involving a father and a restaurant waitress.

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JOHN GREGORY is a thin disguise for Harry Kemp himself, and a certain mild amusement may be derived from the easy identification of the other characters introduced. Emma Silverman is Emma Goldman. John Alexander Mackworth is William Allen White. Miss Clara Martin, celebrated exposer of corrupt millionaires and captains of industry, is Miss Ida M. Tarbell. In the New York offices of the *National Magazine*, which is of course the *American Magazine*, John Gregory meets, among others, Allsworth Lephil (John S. Phillips) and Ray Sanford (Ray Stannard Baker) and Carruthers Hefflin, with the "close cropped salt and pepper beard, like a stage doctor" (Lincoln Steffens). As the wrapper indorsement of "Tramping on Life" expresses it, "Many of the most interesting characters in American letters and politics appear in Kemp's pages. Some of them befriended him, all contributed in some way to make his autobiography one of the most amazing self-revelations since Marie Bashkirtseff."

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BUT it is the last part of "Tramping on Life" that is most astonishing. Gregory, despite advice, goes to live in the "Single Tax Colony of Eden," of which the dominating genius is Penton Baxter, militant socialist and author of "The Slaughter House." "Penton came in . . . the little, handsome, red faced man, with his Napoleonic head too large for his small, stocky body . . . his large, luminous eyes like those of the Italian fisher boy in the painting . . . his mouth a little too large . . . his chin a trifle too heavy jowled. His hands were feminine . . . but his feet were incased in heavy shoes that made them seem the feet of a six foot day laborer." There is also a Mrs. Penton Baxter, and in the telling of the sordid story, which culminates in the yellow journal headline: "Penton Baxter Sues for Divorce—Names Vagabond Poet as Corespondent," hardly a detail is omitted. But then John Gregory is a poet. He himself informs us of the fact. On page 377 of "Tramping on Life" he writes: "My pencil raced over paper . . . raced and raced. 'Here it comes, just like your good rain, so kind to earth. . . . Oh, beautiful God, I thank thee for making me a poet,' I prayed, tears streaming down my face."

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ACCORDING to the monthly score in the October *Bookman* the novels most in demand are:

1. "If Winter Comes," Hutchinson.
2. "Gentle Julia," Tarkington.
3. "The Head of the House of Coombe," Burnett.
4. "Robin," Burnett.
5. "The Vehement Flame," Deland.
6. "Maria Chapdelaine," Hemon.
7. "Brass," Norris.
8. "The Glimpses of the Moon," Wharton.
9. "Cytherea," Hergesheimer.
10. "The Beautiful and Damned," Fitzgerald.

Works of non-fiction in demand are:

1. "The Outline of History," Wells.
2. "The Story of Mankind," Van Loon.
3. "Queen Victoria," Strachey.
4. "The Americanization of Edward Bok," Bok.
5. "The Mind in the Making," Robinson.
6. "Painted Windows," Anonymous.
7. "Outwitting Our Nerves," Jackson and Salisbury.
8. "The Mirrors of Washington," Anonymous.
9. "The Outline of Science," Thomson.
10. "The Conquest of Fear," King.

Authors' Works and Their Ways

Dr. Emile Coué, the famous founder of the Nancy School of Autosuggestion, is planning to visit the United States next January for a series of lectures.

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"Modern Italy" (the Macmillan Company) is the subject of the fourth book in the Institute of Politics publications. Its author is the Hon. Tomasso Tittoni, president of the Italian Senate and former Premier of Italy.

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Although he returned from the Far East less than two months ago Isaac F. Marcosson is off again, this time to put the probe into troubled Germany. He will also visit France and England.

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A selection of Burke's correspondence, made and edited by Harold Laski, is about to be added to the World's Classics, published by the Oxford University Press American Branch.

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George Agnew Chamberlain has written a bootlegging story. It is called "Rackhouse" and will be published by Harper & Brothers in October.

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The death of Elizabeth Boyle O'Reilly, author of "How France Built Her Cathedrals," cut off a promising career. Miss O'Reilly was the daughter of John Boyle O'Reilly and was raised among the literary folk who were always found gathered about the writer's home in Charlestown and Boston.